

NEWS FROM THE HAWAII STATE NUMISMATIC ASSOCIATION AND THE HONOLULU COIN CLUB

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Postal History

BY JAMES A. SIMEK
& DON MEDCALF

The Beginnings of Hawaii's Coinage &



The first official coinage of the Kingdom of Hawaii was the copper cent of 1847. The first portrait stamps of the country were issued in 1853. What do these two collectibles have in common? They both bear the likeness of the longest reigning monarch in Hawaii's history--Kauikeaouli, or as he is better known, Kamehameha III.

Kamehameha III was born in 1813, son of Kamehameha I (The Great) and Keopuolani. His father is remembered as the "unifier" of the Hawaiian Islands, and his mother held the highest royal rank in the kingdom. His older brother was to become Kamehameha II, and the two boys, along with their sister Nahienaena, were considered the most sacred children in the land.

The young Prince Kauikeaouli was only nine years old when his older brother (as King) left for England in 1823. In the King's absence, the Prince was named heir apparent to the throne. When word of Kamehameha II's death reached Hawaii in

1825, the younger brother became King of Hawaii at the age of only 12, under a regency with Kaahumanu as Kuhina Nui (co-ruler).

Many important things occurred during the reign of Kamehameha III. Those affecting the economy included the decline of the sandalwood trade, the rise and fall of the whaling industry, and the beginnings of the profitable sugar-growing industry, still paramount in the Hawaiian economy today. Those affecting the people were also numerous. Kamehameha III was the first monarch to limit the throne's power by his support of the first Constitution, which he signed on October 8, 1840. The rights of all residents of the kingdom, not just those of the Alii, were now recognized. The King appointed ministers and board members to assist in the increasingly complicated administration of government. He recognized the importance of education, and was instrumental in the establishment of many schools for his people. And his grand experiment with private land ownership culminated with the Great Mahele in 1848 under which the kingdom was basically divided into three parts: one going to chiefs and common people, one going to the government, and one being retained by the royal family, it becoming the "crown lands."

During his tenure, several threats were made against Hawaii's sovereignty, principally by the French and British. But the King, through his foresight and willingness to rely on expert advice, was able to successfully repel each incursion.

Kamehameha III married Kalama on February 14, 1837. As there were no surviving

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COINAGE & POSTAL HISTORY

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children from this union, he adopted his nephew, Alexander Loholiho, and named him heir apparent to the throne. He also established a procedure for continuing the line of succession of the monarchy with approval of the Legislature and House of Nobles.

The 1847 copper cent was ordered by James Jackson Jarves, acting as agent for the Hawaiian government. 100,000 of the coins were struck under private contract, presumably by a New England firm. Nothing is known concerning the maker of the pieces, but their delivery to Hawaii aboard the merchant ship Montreal which sailed from Boston via Rio de Janeiro and Tahiti is documented. Their official status is also unquestioned, since payment for them was made in a January 14, 1847 treasury draft in the amount of \$869.56.

The coins did not circulate freely, owing to the prejudices of merchants who attempted to discourage small transactions. This precluded any further coinage plans from being implemented. Most of their use was by neighbor island governors who utilized them for tax and duty payments and collections. In 1862, 11,595 coins were outstanding on treasury books, and in 1884 their legal tender status was removed. Those remaining in the treasury, numbering 88,000 pieces, were shipped out of the country in 1885 as scrap and melted. This accounts for their scarcity today.

Two major obverse types are known, one with a crosslet 4 in date (referred to as the "large bust"), the other with a plain 4 in date (called the "small bust"). Five separate reverse dies are also documented, their major difference being in the number of berries appearing in the wreath, bringing the total number of varieties currently known to six.

The Hawaiian postal system was also established during the reign of Kamehameha III. The need for one was answered in the second of three pieces of legislation enacted in 1845-6 commonly referred to as the "organic acts." The first stamps issued were the famous "Missionaries" of 1851, so-called because

they are generally found on correspondence sent by the missionaries living in Hawaii. They are of simple design, featuring a numeral for value, scroll-work, and country identification. They were printed by the government on the same presses used to produce the newspaper, "The Polynesian."

The second issue was produced in 1853, and was far more elaborate than the first. Known as the "Boston Engraved Issue," they were produced in 5 cent and 13 cent denominations and featured as their main design theme a bust portrait of Kamehameha III. The dies were engraved by a gentleman named Dearborn, and printed in a shop owned by a Mr. Holland, both of Boston. The first shipment arrived in Honolulu in April, 1853, and the stamps were placed on sale in May.

Both the coins and stamps made their debut during the reign of Kamehameha III, arguably the most important Hawaiian monarch. For it was he who sought to give Hawaii recognition and stature in the international community.



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NUMISMATIC MARATHON

BY F. LOO
Coin Collector

Over a period of eleven days, from May 27 to June 6, 1992, Numismatics was the main activity for me. Four days were spent at a Bowers & Merena auction, followed by three days at a Superior Galleries auction and ending with four days at the Long Beach show. During those eleven days, I viewed and handled rare and valuable U.S. colonials, half cents thru the \$50.00 Pan-Pac commemoratives, patterns, paper money, Hawaiian coins, and a set of 1933 Honolulu Clearing House certificates. It seemed like a whole lifetime of numismatics was packed into those eleven days.

The Bowers & Merena (B&M) auction was held at the Airport Hyatt Hotel in Los Angeles. Highlights of this auction included an uncirculated 1794 dollar (the first U.S. dollar), all four of the 1879 and 1880 \$4 Stellas and an outstanding selection of U.S. patterns. The usual contingent of professional auction attendees were there. Their presence prevented any "bargains" from being undetected. One Buffalo nickel which was cataloged as being a \$200 coin, was sold for \$2,000. I was willing to go as high as \$300! Although there were no bargains, the education of learning which coins are in demand at a national level made the whole experience invaluable. Despite the professional competition, I was able to successfully bid on a few proof patterns, including an 1858 flying eagle cent, an 1859 half dollar and a 1878 Barber (not Morgan) silver dollar. I also acquired a choice proof-like 1883 Hawaiian dollar by painfully bidding too high for it.

The most memorable event of the B & M auction occurred after the auction. Having decided to enjoy a nice leisure dinner, at a restaurant, I happened to bump into Q. David Bowers at the entrance. We acknowledged each other and then went our separate ways into the restaurant. During the middle of my



dinner, the waitress told me that Mr. Bowers had picked up the tab for my dinner. Perhaps Mr. Bowers had pity on me, sensing that I may have had to wash dishes, after paying for the items gotten from his auction. In actuality, the few times I've been able to talk to Mr. Bowers, he was very pleasant and helpful, like an old friend. That's why he's so successful and popular.

The Superior Galleries auction was held in the Auction Gallery of their own building in Beverly Hills. Highlights of this auction included a highly rated collection of bust halves and a superb group of 22 Indian head eagles from 1907 to 1933, graded MS-64 to MS-68. At this auction, even more professional dealers attended, since it was just before the Long Beach show. The auction pace was accelerated, making participation more difficult. The B & M auction moved at about 120 lots per hour, but this Superior auction seemed to move at a pace of 200 lots per hour. This means that you had only a few seconds to decide on your bids which usually were in hundred dollar increments. Yes, I did make a few "boo-boos," bidding past my limit on a couple of lots and not being fast enough to bid on a few other items I wanted. However, I managed to successfully acquire some nice bust halves, proof type coins including an 1858 half, 1873 Liberty Seated, and trade dollars, and many scarce Indian head eagles. In the foreign area, I got a complete set of 1890 proof coins from the Kwang-Tung province of China and an interesting 1851 Chile/France pattern.

The morning after the Superior auction, I went to pay my bill, before going to the Long Beach show. Maybe, because I pay my bills promptly, Larry Goldberg was nice enough to give me a preview of the gold proofs to be sold at their October Trompeter auction. You guessed it! Now I'm planning to go to that auction too.

Continued on the reverse of this pg
MARATHON



HENRY OPUKAHA'IA the man who inspired the Missionaries, the sixth wood

Henry Opukaha'ia - the man who inspired the Missionaries to come to Hawaii, is the sixth wood in the Famous People of Hawaii series. This year is the 200th anniversary of the birthday of this interesting young man. Opukaha'ia was about ten years old, in the year 1802, during the battle of Ka'u, a civil war between Kamehameha I and Kaiana's forces. His parents were both slain as they fled into the mountains during the battle. Opukaha'ia's brother was also killed by a spear as he carried him on his back and he (Opukaha'ia) was captured. They spared him his life and named him Opukaha'ia, meaning "split belly." When he was about fourteen years old, Opukaha'ia swam out to greet an old English ship, named the "Triumph." He became very friendly with the ship's captain, Britnell, who trained him to become a cabin boy. Soon he was taken on a great adventurous voyage all over the world. He traveled to the northwest coast, the far east to China, and around the Cape of Good Hope to the New England coast.

When Opukaha'ia was sixteen years old, Captain Britnell brought him to New Haven, Connecticut. Lonely and nowhere to go, the Rev. Edwin W. Dwight, a student at Yale college took him in as a pupil. His inquisitiveness and great enthusiasm to learn, helped him to learn English, the usual curriculum of the time and also the general religion of the Protestant churches of New England. He learned to read and write and was taught by the use of a spelling book. Soon Opukaha'ia was eager to take the Christian religion back to his homeland. He prepared his English grammar for his

native language and then began to translate the Bible into his native Hawaiian language. But Henry Opukaha'ia did not live to see his work completed. At a very young age of twenty-six, he contacted typhus, and died on February 17, 1818. His final resting place is in the town cemetery in Cornwall, Connecticut.

To order your wooden token send 25 cents plus a self addressed stamped envelope to the: Honolulu Coin Club

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MARATHON Continued from pg 3

After two major auctions, it seemed that I was going to have a harder time at the Long Beach show, because of its enormous size and the presence of hundreds of dealers on the buying side of the bourse floor. At this show, I usually feel like a helpless jelly-fish floating amongst the sharks and barracudas. Many dealers from Hawaii attend this show regularly, so they can tell you about it better than I can. I did buy a nice Fugio cent, type II gold dollars, a 1909-O and a 1911-D Indian half eagle, 1911-D quarter eagles, and two 1913-S double eagles.

Physical recovery from the eleven day numismatic marathon took me one week. Financial recovery will take years, if ever. Attending a national auction and a major show is hard work for me because I wanted to make use of every minute while I'm there. Meals and sleep are time-consuming distractions. Also, at these auctions and shows, you are competing with full-time national professionals. If you ever plan to attend a major mainland numismatic event, I would be glad to give you some appropriate cautions, at a Honolulu Coin Club meeting. See you there!

♥ ♥ WEDDING BELLS ♥ ♥

On Friday afternoon, the 1st of May 1992 we were privileged to attend the wedding of Roger Risch and Judy Topinio. The Hickam Air Force Base Officer's Club which is located next to the Pearl Harbor entrance, was the setting for the wedding and also the reception. Roger is a long time member of the HCC and HSNA. Congratulations and best wishes to this lovely couple. Aloha!



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COIN CLUBS OF HAWAII



BIG ISLAND COIN CLUB

APRIL 1992

Final planning preparations was the primary topic of the meeting held on April 2nd for the Coin Show on April 5th. Thanks to Byron Toma for the meeting refreshments; Rick Howsley for hustling for door prizes; Don, Rick, Walt, Roger, and others for placing interesting coins into circulation as part of the promotion for the show. Congratulations to Stephen Quaccia, winner of the grand door prize. A moment of silence was held for departed member Ted Perry.

MAY 1992

Congratulations to B.I.C.C. treasurer Jim Moore on his promotion to Captain. Review of April Show was major topic of meeting. Attended by 22 members and guests.

JUNE 1992

Election of officers was held:
President.....Mildred Murakami
V. President.....Marta Bowman
Rec. Secretary.....Kay Kozohara
Corr. Secretary....Walt Southward
Treasurer.....Jim Moore
Sergeant-at-arms...Byron Toma
Directors.....Harold Watanabe
Don Nigro
Alton Chow
Ken Tanouye
Virginia Dicks.

Aloha to Bill & Barbara Schroeder and Roger Chikuami who are leaving for California. Present was Charles Iseri who is a charter member. Welcome to new members Derrick Ah Sing and Peter Petrulis. An interesting report was given by Don Nigro on the Hilo Library and numismatic research in the library.

HONOLULU COIN CLUB

APRIL 1992

Video on "counterfeit bills" was shown to members and guests. Final preps was discussed for HSNA/HCC Mini show on May 9th. Auction and door prizes followed.

MAY 1992

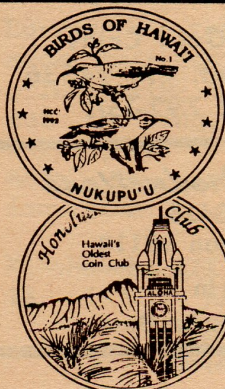
May show was a sell-out on bourse tables, however, attendance was down (over 200 people attended). Overall the show was rated, satisfactory by the members. Our thanks to the following exhibitors at the May show: Crane Saito--Books and medals of the 25th anniversary of the HCC; Francis Damon--Japanese and Chinese ancient coins; Charles Matsuda--Hawaii war years coins, paper currency, comics, and toys; W.K. Young--Small and large gold certificate currency. An auction and door prizes followed the meeting.

JUNE 1992

Dennis Tomiyasu gave a very interesting talk and display of Hawaiian tokens. He had over 60 pieces, of which some were one of a kind. Pawn Brokers Law (in relation to coin dealers) was discussed by President Greg Hunt. Sunday's newspaper had a article on milk covers. Do you think it will make a come-back? Interesting, because the All Collector's show at the N.B.C. has also issued, as part of its promotions, milk covers. F. Loo brought and spoke on several pattern coins, he recently purchased.

JULY 1992

Election of officers was held.
President.....Greg Hunt
VPresident.....M.F. Kendrick
Co-Secretary.....Gary Lau
James Silva
Treasurer.....Charles Matsuda
Sergeant-at-arms...Landis Niau
Directors.....W.K. Young
Crane Saito
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